

Minutes of Comberton Annual Parish Meeting
on Wednesday 29 April 2009 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

Present: 36 parishioners including Parish Council members, speakers and members of the public, and Mrs Gail Stoehr (Clerk).

Cllr Miss Chris Westgarth presided. The written reports from the meeting are appended in full to these minutes.

1. Approval & signing of the minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting on 30 April 2008

The minutes were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

2. Matters arising from the minutes

Nothing that will not be discussed later this evening.

3. Report of the Parish Council for the year 2008-2009 from Chris Westgarth, Chairman.

The report is appended in full to these minutes.¹

4. Report from Gail Stoehr, Responsible Financial Officer, on the Parish Council's finances past & future including the presentation of audited accounts from year ending 2008.

The RFO presented the audited financial statement of the Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2008² and reported on the principles applied to the Parish Council budget³.

5. Report by Cllr S. Harangozo on District Council Matters

The report is appended in full to these minutes.⁴

6. Report by Cllr F Whelan on County Council Matters⁵

The report is appended in full to these minutes. The meeting thanked Cllr Whelan for saving the Day Care provision.

Police report by Trudy Newman-Hart PCSO⁶

7. Report on the work and activities of groups and organisations who have either received a grant from the Parish Council or have Parish Council appointees on their charity or organisation including:

7a Herringland Charity (trustees appointed by the Parish Council)⁷

The Parish Council Chairman reported on the work of the charity.

7b Comberton Village Institute (trustees appointed by the Parish Council)

Malcolm Wright (Vice Chairman) conveyed the Brian Cook's the Institute Chairman's apologies that he was unable to attend, and reported in his absence.⁸

7c St Mary's Church⁹

Don Fisher reported.

7d Library Services¹⁰

Richard Young reported on the Summer Reading Challenge and took questions from the meeting.

Q. When will the Central Library open?

A. There has been a change of building contractors and the aim is for the Library to re-open in September/October 2009.

7e Twining Association
Malcolm Wright read the report in Peter Milton's absence.¹¹

7f Village Help Scheme¹²
The report was read in Dr McCabe's absence.

7g Scouts¹³
Brian Worrall reported.

8. Reports from other village groups and organisations on their activities.

8.0 Comberton Village College¹⁴

Stephen Munday reported. He requested photos and articles etc. about the opening of the college for the college's 50 year celebrations. He invited residents to contribute and participate.

8.1 The following reports were noted

- Meridian Primary School¹⁵ - Glenis Virgo
- South St Allotments¹⁶
- WI¹⁷ - Sandra Hyde
- Comberton Contract¹⁸ - Anne Horler. The meeting applauded the magazine for it's financial independence. Congratulations were recorded to the Contact team for winning their recent award.
- Connections Bus¹⁹
- Allotment and Gardeners Association²⁰ - summarised in David Ellis's absence

There were no questions on the reports.

9. To consider resolutions of which advance notice has been given.

None.

10. Any other Parish Matters

Affordable Housing

Charles Chambers reported on an assessment undertaken approximately 3 years ago where the need for affordable housing was estimated at approximately 40. Two years ago potential/exception sites were identified. Potential sites had been identified and their merits and restrictions considered.

He outlined the background to the various sites:

The Valley - since the planning permission had been granted at The Valley, the developer, had gone into receivership.

Bush Close - the developers were Circle Anglia. A public meeting was held and residents voiced their objections. The developer withdrew their proposals.

West St – this is strictly in Toft Parish and if developed Comberton residents would not have priority and Comberton Parish Council would not get a precept from this.

Two recently suggested sites were included on the agenda for this Annual Parish Meeting to seek the views of the residents. These two sites were:

- South east of junction of Barton Road and the Drift. *South Cambridgeshire District Council Planning Officer has indicated this is a prominent site which potentially would have an impact on entering the Village – would depend on quality and screening. Would not rule out. Drainage issues – technically could be addressed but might be prohibitively expensive for Affordable site depending on the size.*

- North of 82 Green End. *The Planning Officer commented on the possible effect on the rural character of Green End; possibly small terrace of up to 4 homes needing no highways improvement.*

There then followed an open and frank discussion of the need for affordable housing, the type of housing that might be required, the process and planning policies including concerns about development outside the village envelope and also in green belt.

Cllr Harangozo explained the District Council's policy on housing and planning had changed in recent years and the District Council's perspective when identifying sites and need.

It was noted that The definition of affordable housing is a government constraints and that Developments above a size percentage have to be affordable

Concern was expressed that there are problems with housing being granted permission to change in size as an example from 3 to 5 bedrooms.

The Parish Council was challenged as to why affordable housing was being discussed at the Annual Parish Council meeting. It was explained that a public forum such as the Annual Parish Meeting had been considered an appropriate way to seek residents views and that the agenda and details of the discussions had been displayed on the village notice board.

A resident expressed they were unhappy that landowners were not approached and that the District and Parish Council were just selecting sites. It was reported that the land in Green End was owned by the Church and questioned if it is the duty of the Parish Council or the District Council officer to go around a village and decide where to build housing?

The Parish Council's response was that it had been given this remit in 2003 when the Parish Plan was undertaken and from the responses analysed the need for affordable housing had been identified.

Cllr Harangozo explained that exception sites cannot happen without the support of the village via the Parish Council.

Questions were asked about two other recently developed sites; those in Milner Rd and also on the site opposite garage in West Street and how these had come about and if these had been taken into account in the survey.

It was remarked that the allocation of the affordable housing in The Thornbury scheme had had a poor uptake. It was questioned if this was the case then could there still be a need for more housing.

An explanation was requested and given as to what constitutes a "Comberton connection" It was noted that this is defined by the Housing Association Framework, and includes living in the village, parents in the village etc.

Concern was expressed about proposed densities on the site in Green end and also on the drainage problems. It was noted that a planning officer takes into account the constraints of roads, drainage and rural character.

Following a show of hands the general feeling of the meeting was that the Parish Council has done it in the wrong way by having this as an agenda item at this meeting.

The Chairman gave assurances that there was no intention not to be open, or not to do things properly and that the Parish Council had already invested a lot of time and effort in trying to ensure that all residents were kept as informed as possible through the regular articles in the Comberton Contact and also by holding a series of public meetings. The status of the Annual Parish Meeting and the empowerment of residents to pass resolutions etc was explained by the Clerk.

Parishioners were thanked for attending the meeting.

The Parish Council will meet again in 2 weeks and residents were invited to attend the meeting when the feedback from this meeting would be considered by the Parish Council further.

11. Closure of meeting

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 9.55pm.

Signed _____ (Chairman) _____ (date)

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- ¹ Chairman's report
 - ² Audit report
 - ³ Financial report
 - ⁴ Report from Cllr Harangozo on District Council Matters
 - ⁵ Report from Cllr Whelan on County Council Matters
 - ⁶ Police report
 - ⁷ Herringland Charity
 - ⁸ Comberton Village Institute
 - ⁹ St Mary's Church report
 - ¹⁰ Library Services report
 - ¹¹ Twinning report
 - ¹² Village Help Scheme
 - ¹³ Scouts report
 - ¹⁴ Comberton Village College
 - ¹⁵ Meridian Primary School
 - ¹⁶ South St Allotments
 - ¹⁷ WI – Sandra Hyde
 - ¹⁸ Comberton Contract – Anne Horler
 - ¹⁹ Connections Bus
 - ²⁰ Allotment and Gardeners Association report